Newsletter of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh
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FIELD OUTING: Sunday, 22nd July 2018, 6.30AM: Kasu Brahmananda Reddy (KBR) National Park, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad.

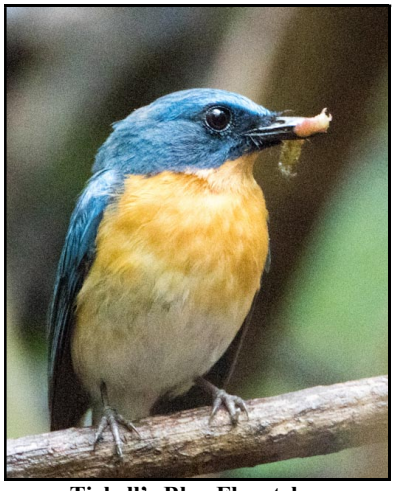
Spread over 400 acres, this park was originally the Chiran Palace grounds. Easily accessible due to its location in the heart of the city, the KBR Park is a haven for Partridges and Peafowl, and one can expect to see some scrubland birds as well. The lake in the park, and its surrounds, can also throw up some interesting water birds. This will be a half-day trip. For further details and to co-ordinate, please contact Ms Surekha Aitabathula (99490-38532).

INDOOR MEETING: Thursday, 12th July 2018, 6.00PM: TALK BY RAGHUSRAVANKUMAR RAILLA: ECOLOGY OF THE GREY PELICAN AT TELINEELAPURAM

Sravan holds a Master's Degree in Environmental Biotechnology and is a Research Associate with Prof Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University. He has worked extensively in Telineelapuram, Srikakulam District, a nesting site of the near-threatened Grey Pelican. The talk will highlight the studies conducted in recording resources utilized by the Grey Pelican and the conservation measures which could be implemented for species sustainability.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher vs Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher

Lawrence Mathappan



Tickell's Blue Flycatcher
(Photo: Ritish Kannayagari)

Scientific name: *Cyornis tickelliae*
Resident/Migrant status: Resident
Size: 14 cm
Local Names: Adharanga (Gujarati), Neelakkuruvi (Malayalam and Tamil)

Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Scientific name: *Cyornis rubeculoides*
Resident/Migrant status: Resident, Partial migrant
Size: 14 cm
Local Names: Ghatki (Bengali), Manzil Pho (Lepcha), Neelachempan (Malayalam)

ID features – Male: The whole upper plumage is dark blue, darker on the side of the face and brighter in line from the nostril over each eye; wings and tail black washed with blue; throat, breast and upper abdomen bright ferruginous, rest of the lower plumage pure white. **ID features – Female:** A duller replica of the male; iris brown; bill black; legs greyish brown. The bill is wide and flattened at the base and fringed with long hair. **Field Identification:** A dark blue bird with throat and breast reddish; rest of the underparts white; no white line over the eye. Flits about the inner side of trees and brushes in shady wood and groves, continually sings in a short metallic trill, the first half descending and second half ascending. **Occurrence:** Moist-deciduous or evergreen biotope; scrub and bamboo jungle, groves and wooded gardens. **Range:** Nepal, Peninsular India, except NW arid areas; Sri Lanka.	**ID features – Male:** Above: Dull ultramarine blue; bright turquoise blue on forehead and supercilium; black lores. Below: Throat dark blue; breast rufous: belly and under tail coverts white washed with buff. **ID features – Female:** Above: Olive brown tinged with rufous on rump; pale lore's and eye ring. Below: Throat buff; breast brownish yellow, rest underparts white. **Field Identification:** Several other flycatchers, particularly females, have a rufous breast and are very similar. They may be eliminated as follows: **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** (*Cyornis tickelliae*) has blueish tail. **Kashmir Flycatcher** (*Ficedula subrubra*) and **Red-breasted Flycatcher** (*Ficedula parva*) have white tail base. **Snowy-browed Flycatcher** (*Ficedula hyperythra),* **Brooks's Flycatcher** (*Cyornis poliogenys*) and **Sapphire Flycatcher** (*Ficedula sapphira*) may have more or less yellowish-brown belly but not white. **Slaty-backed Flycatcher** (*Ficedula hodgsonii)* has a buffish olive throat and breast **White-bellied Blue Flycatcher** (*Cyorniis pallipes*) Has chestnut tail and is larger **Occurrence:** A partial migrant common in its breeding grounds, widely scattered in winter. Forests with plenty of undergrowth, wooded *nallahs*, well wooded gardens and secondary forests. **Range:** Summer visitor to Himalayas; resident in NE India; winters in eastern Himalayan foothills, Bangladesh and south to SW India and Sri Lanka

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Bird Humour

Umesh Mani

B.C.
EVERYBODY IS TRYING TO KILL ME! ;SOB;
DR. PETER
HEAD SHRINKER
THERE, THERE... IT'S REALLY NOTHING TO LOSE YOUR HEAD OVER.
ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT YOU GOT A LOUSY BEDSIDE MANNER?

(From The Times of India, October 1, 2012)

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ECOLOGY OF THE GREY PELICAN AT TELINEELAPURAM

Report – Indoor Meeting, July 12, 2018

Surekha Aitabathula

Photo: Amardeep Singh

Research Associate at the Prof Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University and a Master's Degree holder in Environmental Biotechnology from JNTUH, Sravan is an erudite scholar as well as an avid birder. He is in the final stages of submission of his thesis on "Resources utilised by the Grey Pelican and the conservation measures which could be implemented for the species sustainability." His thesis is geographically specific to Telineelapuram village in Tekkali Mandal of Srikakulam District in Andhra Pradesh. Sravan spoke to our members on July 12, 2018 about the location of his research being selected for its importance as a nesting site of the near threatened Grey Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*).

Speaking about the Grey Pelicans, Sravan explained that Pelicans nest on low trees near wetlands and sometimes near human habitation. Sharing more details, Sravan said that Tamarind trees are a favourite for nesting, as these strong trees can withstand the weight of very closely built nests of the Pelicans. Grey Pelicans are colonial breeders and often breed in the company of other water birds like Painted Storks. The nest, built by the male, is a thick platform of twigs. The clutch size is three to four chalky white eggs that turn a dirty off-white as they age. Eggs hatch in 30 to 33 days. Interestingly the Pelican does not hatch the eggs under its body – it hatches by tucking them under its webbed feet. The young stay near the nest for three to five months after which they take one straight flight out. When heading to their roosts they fly in formation in small groups with steady flapping. During the hot part of the day they are known to soar on thermals and they cool themselves using gular fluttering and panting.

The tip of the bill is yellowish orange, hence the other name Spot-billed Pelican. It catches fish in its huge pouched bill while swimming at the surface. Sometimes Pelicans indulge in group hunting by lining up together and driving the fish towards the shallows. The wingspan is a massive 1.8 to 3.5 metres; the adult bird is four feet tall, tipping the scales at 6 kg. A near threatened species, Grey Pelican is protected by law in India, Sri Lanka, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Cotton Pygmy-goose (*Nettapus coromandelianus*)

Cotton Pygmy-goose (Chennai, January 27, 2018)

Order: Anseriformes
Family: Anatidae
Genus: *Nettapus*
Species: *N. coromandelianus*
Size: 26-37 cm

Description & distribution: The Cotton Pygmy-goose, also known as the Cotton Teal, is the smallest of the wild ducks seen in India, and individuals on the lower end of the size range are among the smallest waterfowl in the world. In the male, the plumage is predominantly white, with the head glossy black on top. The neck and underparts are also white, and it has a prominent black collar and breast-band, and broad white wing-bar, which is clearly visible in flight, markedly contrasting with the metallic greenish wings. The goose-like bill is short and deep at the base. The female is paler and more brownish, has a dark eye-stripe, and lacks the collar and wing-bar, though its wings have a white trailing edge; the non-breeding male also resembles the female, except for the white wing-bar. It is resident, and sometimes locally migratory, across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Habitat & behaviour: The Cotton Pygmy-goose is usually seen in small to mid-sized flocks, on all kinds of inland water bodies – village tanks, *jheels*, lakes, ponds, channels, shallow lagoons, inundated paddy fields, etc. It can become very tame when it is undisturbed and gets used to human presence – for instance, in village tanks. It has a fast flight and utters a clucking call while flying. It feeds mainly by foraging in wet grasslands or marshes, and its diet consists mainly of vegetable matter like aquatic plants and leaves, though it may also occasionally take insects, crustaceans etc. It is often seen perching on trees.

Nesting: The Cotton Pygmy-goose breeds mainly between July and September. The nest is a natural hollow in a tree-trunk, in or near water, and is usually lined with grass, reeds, feathers or other soft material. The usual clutch consists of 6-12 ivory-white eggs.

Local name: The Cotton Pygmy-goose is known as *'Girri'*, *'Girria'* or *'Girja'* in Hindi, '*Dudu chuluva*' in Telugu, *'Kaanuk hans'* in Sanskrit and *'Kannadi cheravi'* in Tamil.

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For Private Circulation Only
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